

CWD UPDATE

March 25, 2003

Over 700 samples of hunter harvested deer in New York have failed to find CWD in that state. In an effort to keep the disease out of New York, the State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Agriculture and Markets have barred the import of captive deer or elk by zoos, hunting preserves or other entities, and prohibited the feeding of wild deer under most circumstances.

The European Scientific Steering Committee has issued a report titled "Opinion on Chronic Wasting Disease and tissues that might carry a risk for human and animal feed chains". A copy can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm./food/fs/sc/ssc/out323_en.pdf

Several states are beginning to report the results of CWD testing from this falls hunting seasons. A complete report on numbers and results will be distributed latter. To date, only Utah has reported finding CWD. All other states previously without CWD have still failed to find it. That leaves Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, New Mexico and Utah as the only states reporting CWD in wild cervid populations. Saskatchewan is still the lone Canadian Province with confirmed CWD in the wild.

The Wisconsin DNR has issued a report on the results of an audit of the deer farms in their state. This is a very interesting report and sheds light on the operation of these facilities. A couple of interesting findings is that DNR investigators documented the escape of 436 deer into the wild from game farms. These escapes are from approximately 1/3 of the deer facilities in the state. Additionally, several cash transactions were uncovered where the required shipping tags were not used and record keeping ranged from very meticulous to trying to rely on memory. At one facility, investigators found partially burnt records in a trashcan. The complete report can be downloaded at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/enforcement/docs/DeerFarmAudit.pdf>.

Attempts in the legislature of Montana to negate or change the citizen vote to ban game farms continue. Previously, several bills to overturn the ban had been introduced or discussed. Citizen response has been to maintain the ban. Current efforts are to provide a buy out to the operators of the remaining facilities. The latest bill, introduced by Representative Jim Peterson would provide funds to pay farmers up to \$6,000 per animal. The bill will be heard in the Montana Agriculture Committee, which has been friendly to operators in the past.

Both Vermont and New Hampshire have reported that tests for CWD on hunter harvested deer failed to find any positives. Vermont tested approximately 251 animals. I do not have the number of animals tested in New Hampshire.

The Wisconsin DNR reports that an additional 16 deer from the eradication and/or management zone have tested positive for CWD. This brings the total count for positives in Wisconsin to 80 animals to maintain an approximately 2% infection rate from that state. The new cases were split evenly between Dane and Iowa counties.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reports that all tests from hunter harvested samples have been returned with no positives being found in the state. Over 5,000 samples were submitted for testing.

Although not directly related to CWD, a new report by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation provides information on economic impacts of hunting and fishing on a state-by-state basis. This information is good to use in analyzing the impacts of CWD on state economies and can be found at <http://www.sportsmenslink.org/Sportman/>